

SIGHTS AND SCENERY.

The Adelphi Theatre.—The version of Mrs. Stone's world-famous tale which has been produced here under the title of "Slave Life, or Uncle Tom's Cabin," is the best as a drama that has been done, although in none is poor Uncle Tom himself worse treated, or made less of. It has happened that we have seen them all,—at the far-distant Grecian, the obeliscal Surrey, the trans-pontine Victoria where every third lady visitor has a blessed infant in her maternal arms, the equine Astley's, and the little theatre in Wych-street, to say nothing of "Bower Saloons" and divers provincial resting-places of Thespia where it has proved a good card. After such a voracious such a laceration of English ears, and pain to eyes used to white faces, we are surely in a condition to pronounce a judgment, and this we do in favour of the Adelphi. The make-up and acting of Emery, Wigan, Madame Celeste, Miss Woolgar, and Mrs. Koeley (the "dreadful" wicked "Topsy") are admirable, and throughout there is an air of truthfulness, notwithstanding exaggeration of some national peculiarities, which those who know the country will bear witness to. The first scene, Shelby's plantation, with steps up to the living rooms in the house at the back; a double scene, showing a boudoir and a bedroom, in which the floor and sides of both shift so as to remove the first with the actor in it, and leave the whole stage for the bed-room; and the passage of the Ohio in the second Act, are very cleverly contrived.

Julien's Concerts.—The "Mendelssohn night" was a great treat to the lovers of fine music; and the earnest attention of a crowded house told that the majority present were such. Beethoven afforded the staple for Thursday night. On Monday night Mr. Julien will bid farewell to his English friends, for a time, in one of those glittering "masqued balls" which he has contrived, for many seasons past, to divert of, at all events, any external impropriety. We wish him a good reception in America.

The Marionettes, kept out of their own little theatre by the well-deserved success of Mr. Woodin's eccentric entertainment, "The Carpet-bag and Sketch-book," have taken refuge in the *St. James's Theatre*, where they are playing as cleverly as ever, improved rather than otherwise by age and their country trip.

A WORD TO CHURCH RESTORERS.

GRAVE-YARDS.

It is the usual practice of all Christians to view with feelings of reverence and antiquarian pride the timeworn temple of their ancestors, and, whenever extensive repairs are needed, and the necessary funds obtained to restore it without delay to its pristine beauty, scarcely any regard is ever paid to the crowded or sanitary state of the neighbourhood, the confined approaches to the church, or the vast accumulation of corpses in the burying-ground.

As one proof, amongst the many I could adduce, of the necessity of drawing attention to this subject, I will instance a church in a large market-town in Suffolk, in a very dilapidated state, about to be nearly rebuilt and enlarged on its present site, under the advice of a well-qualified architect. This church is situated on the lowest ground in the parish: the burying-ground surrounds it, the surface of which is now from 3 feet to 4 feet above the level of the floor-line of the edifice, caused by the gradual accumulation of about 1,600 tons of human bodies, and in the interior are many well-filled vaults.

The whole site is most unhealthy, reeking with putrid gases, and traces are visible of the percolating influence of liquified corpses from without exuding through the walls of the edifice. A portion of the congregation on Sabbath days are often affected with nausea to such an extent as to cause them to leave the church before service is concluded. To the consumptive and delicate, and, indeed, to all, the inhalation of such noxious gas-like vapours holds out, at least, the germs of death; and it can be nothing short of madness or ignorance of the common laws of nature to

expend money in nearly rebuilding, and enlarging even a sacred edifice on such a malarial site. J. F. CLARK.

RAILWAY IN THE THAMES.

AMONG the various schemes proposed to be submitted to Parliament in the ensuing session, is one to incorporate a company to make a railway, with a footpath alongside, from London-bridge to Westminster-bridge. The line is to be carried along a viaduct composed of a series of iron girders, supported by cast-iron piles driven into the bed of the river at a certain distance from the north bank of the Thames.

A correspondent has favoured us with the "outline of a similar idea which occurred to him some years ago," but we are scarcely prepared to advocate it.

The writer says,—It is frankly admitted, then, that the proposed pier would interfere with the vagaries of the barges; but, on the other hand, certain arrangements will now be described, which would leave the navigation more clear than before, and materially facilitate the transit of merchandise both up and down the river.

To accomplish this, it is proposed that steam engines should be erected; and, if a railway was made part of the plan, it is intended that these engines should perform a twofold duty; first, give motion to the trains; and, second, drive one, or if necessary two, endless ropes, one on each side of the terrace. Now, these ropes would always be made to move in the direction in which the tide was flowing for the time being, and at a velocity of two or three miles per hour above that of the water; then, as the barges arrived at either terminus, say at London-bridge, to proceed with the flood-tide, they would be attached to the rope, and so towed up the river, sailing in a line, and close to the pier. The object in communicating a higher velocity than that of the water, would be to give the vessels steerage-way, which would be required, not only to keep them in a line alongside the pier, but more especially that they might shoot rapidly across to their respective wharfs on arriving opposite thereto.

THE LIGHTING OF STREETS.

ANTIOCH, in the beginning of the fourth century, discovered the importance, as a matter of police, of lighting the streets. But the discovery lapsed, and it was only in the middle of the sixteenth century that Paris lighted up her streets by fires made of pitch rosin. Slowly did this matter of primary police creep on till the end of the last century, when it was started forward with extraordinary vigour. Chemists had long observed that coal on being distilled produced a combustible gas, and the means of collecting and distributing various kinds of gas were among the common experiments of a lecture table. But it was not till 1792 that Murdoch employed coal gas to light up his offices at Redruth. Now, gas has entirely superseded oil in the lighting of the streets, but simply as a question of cost, the coals from which it is produced being cheaper than the corn necessary to form tallow. It by no means follows that gas is always the most convenient form of using a combustible. "It would certainly (says Liebig) be one of the greatest discoveries of the age if any one could succeed in condensing coal gas into a white, dry, solid, odourless substance, portable, and capable of being placed upon a candlestick, or burned in a lamp." A want is rarely expressed by man that science does not administer to it; and already is the desire of Liebig accomplished. A mineral oil flowed out of coal in Derbyshire, and was obviously produced by a slow process of distillation from the coal. It contained solid paraffine dissolved in a liquid oil. Mr. Young, of Manchester, in examining the mode of its formation, found that paraffine, a solid waxy substance, hitherto never produced from coal, could in reality be readily formed in commercial quantities by a slow and regular distillation. This, in fact, is "condensed coal gas;" or, rather, it might be considered as a solid form of olefant gas. It is, therefore, the want of Liebig supplied. In

forming coke, this product, dissolved in an oil of a similar composition, may readily be obtained; and useful products are made instead of those waste gases now thrown uselessly into the atmosphere. It might appear chimerical to you if I were to state many of the consequences which must follow if this discovery in its maturity be found as successful as it promises to be in its dawn; but it is not difficult to see that a cheaper and less carbonized coke could be burned in our domestic fires, and thus we might see a sun which now refuses to penetrate the sooty canopy of our cities.—*Dr. Lyon Playfair.*

HIGH BRIDGE ACROSS THE GENESSEE RIVER AT PORTAGE, NEW YORK.

ON the Buffalo and New York City Railroad, which is 423 miles long, with a continuous track of 6 feet gauge, there is a singular piece of carpentry, in the shape of what is known as the "High-bridge," across the Genessee river, at Portage, Wyoming county, N. Y. This bridge is 800 feet long, and 234 feet high from the bed of the river to the rail. The masonry in the river is 30 feet high; the trestles, 190 feet; and the truss, 14 feet. It contains 1,602,000 feet B.M. timber; 108,562 lbs. iron in bolts, &c.; and 9,200 cubic yards cement masonry. It was commenced 1st July, 1851, and completed—so as to be crossed with an engine—August 14th, 1852. It is estimated that one of the trestles, or bents, will sustain a weight of 3,109 tons in addition to its own weight and that of the truss above it. The general plan was designed by Mr. Sams Seymour, chief engineer of the road. Mr. S. M. Seymour was superintending engineer. Messrs. Lauman, Rockefeller, and Moore, were the contractors.

CONTRACTORS' LAWS.

Where a builder contracts with a mechanic to perform a certain quantity of work, and discharges him without a just cause, the mechanic can recover the proper fee payable upon the unfinished work.

LANARSH COUNTY COURT.—**AUGER v. SILVERSIDES.**—This action, brought to recover 41.10s. on contract, is one deserving of notice by builders departing from good faith, and to mechanics contracting with them. The plaintiff is a carpenter, and the defendant is a master builder of Walsworth, who contracted with the plaintiff to make the staircases of sixteen houses, in Thornton-street, Walsworth, for the sum of 24l. When the plaintiff had completed the stairs of eight houses, the defendant summarily dismissed him, on the ground of being able to finish the remaining houses himself. The plaintiff had at various times drawn upon the defendant to the amount of 12l. being precisely one half of the contract, and the money just sufficient to pay for what work had been done. Mr. Auger, it appeared, informed the defendant that unless he allowed him to complete his contract, he would charge him for his (plaintiff's) prospective profit upon the unfinished houses, and taking as a datum the profit he had obtained upon the first eight houses, he now sued him for the sum of that profit, 41.10s. The defendant had paid the sum of five shillings into Court, as the *amende*, for plaintiff's disappointment. It further transpired from Mr. Auger's evidence, that it was the practice of persons like the defendant, to get carpenters to take a contract like this, when hands were scarce, and hardly to be obtained, and as soon as work got slack, to dismiss the contractor, upon some pretence or other, and finish the job themselves. The specification being put in, and the defendant being unable to prove any tangible charge against the plaintiff's work, the learned judge (J. P. Taylor, esq.) observed it was a clear breach of faith as well as contract, on the part of the defendant, and far from reputable to any tradesman, and gave a verdict for the whole amount, with costs. It may not be amiss to observe, that the expenses attending this breach of contract amount to very nearly the sum the plaintiff would have completed the contract for.

WARMING STUDIO.—I should recommend "C. P. S." who asks as to "warming studio," to ascertain the capabilities of the boiler at the back of his kitchen-range. This may be an easy method of warming his apartment on the hot water plan. Should this fail, he could have a stove with a boiler in his fire-place, which could be applied, as he says, the night before.—T. G.